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SUBJECT: TFUS01: NEW ZEALAND OFFERS ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 162226

1. The Government of New Zealand has made a general offer of assistance to the United States in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In addition, the government has approved specific areas of assistance, and the New Zealand Embassy has been instructed to convey those offers to USG officials on September 2 local time.

2. The specific offers include:

For now:

-- Search and rescue team: It has trained with FEMA and can be deployed at short notice.

-- Police disaster ID teams: These forensic teams were deployed to Thailand to help identify tsunami victims.

For the recovery phase:

-- NZ Disaster Management Team that has been involved in flood recovery in New Zealand. The team would be pleased to go to the affected region to meet officials there, or to invite the officials to New Zealand if that would be preferable to the officials.

3. Air New Zealand also has asked if it could provide assistance. The airline suggests that it could help transport stranded people (victims and families) and deliver cargo and equipment, as examples of what it might be able to do. It is open to addressing other transportation needs. The point of contact at Air New Zealand is: Rick Osborne, manager, government and international relations, public and government affairs, tel 011-64-9-336-2905; cell 011-64-21-737-667; e-mail Rick.Osborne@airnz.co.nz. (New Zealand is 16 hours ahead of Washington.)

4. New Zealand Prime Minister Clark, who sent letters of sympathy to the President and the Secretary, stopped at Consulate Auckland on September 2 to sign a condolence book. The mission has received numerous calls from New Zealanders offering condolences and assistance. (We are advising them to donate cash through non-governmental organizations.) The local Red Cross and Salvation Army have launched drives and set up toll-free phone lines to raise funds for the hurricane's victims.

5. Post welcomes any questions or instructions.  
Burnett